

Community Design

Physical Layout



This picture of Pechin Avenue shows how the hilly terrain dictates the street patterns in the area.

The Morningside, Kenwood, and Riverdale neighborhoods are located southeast of downtown. Morningside and Kenwood have a traditional neighborhood design with narrow, tree-lined streets arranged in a grid system. However, given the hilly terrain of the area, many streets do not connect or have shorter blocks than average. The southeastern section of the Riverdale neighborhood, bordering Roanoke County, is suburban in its development patterns, with large lots and curving streets.

Ninth Street, Bennington Street, 13th Street, and Dale Avenue are the most visible and heavily-used corridors in the neighborhoods. Each arterial's streetscape should offer a welcoming impression of the area and adequately support pedestrian, bicycle, auto, and transit traffic. Features such as clearly defined on-street parking and bike lanes, street trees, and well-marked or "articulated" crosswalks can enhance a streetscape. Some arterial streets already incorporate many principles of good street design: for example, 13th Street features several tree-lined median strips. More design features similar to this are needed to improve the appearance and function of the streets. Traffic calming designs which encourage autos to travel at safe and manageable speeds are also a key consideration for streetscape enhancements.

Collector streets like Buena Vista Boulevard and Kenwood Boulevard provide access from residential areas to arterial streets. Many collector streets feature sidewalks, planting strips, and mature street trees. It is key for collector streets to maintain their residential character and appealing streetscape while supporting traffic circulation through the neighborhoods. In several cases in the area, collector streets need basic infrastructure improvements to build on their aesthetic appeal and overall function. Buena Vista Boulevard needs curb and gutter installations to improve on-street parking and storm water drainage, as well as to better define the street.

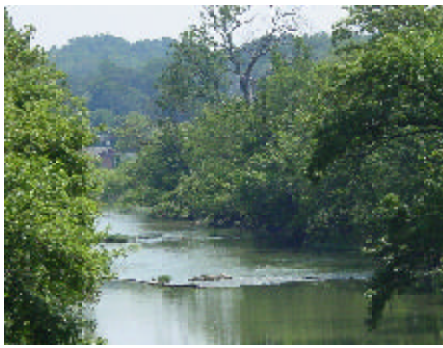


Montrose Avenue: a collector street with excellent infrastructure provides easy circulation for pedestrians and autos alike.

Physical Layout (cont.)

In general, smaller residential streets are narrow, single lane streets with parking on one or both sides. This type of street is often referred to as a "yield street," when cars traveling in opposite directions meet, one car must yield to let the other pass. This type of street is very effective in promoting neighborhood-appropriate traffic speeds. Many streets have accessible alleys. Alleyways are seven to ten feet wide and provide residents with rear access to their properties. Most alleys are graveled, but some are paved with cobblestone or brick.

Land Use Patterns



Roanoke River: Taken from the 9th Street Bridge in front of the former American Viscose Plant. Historically the river played a critical role in land use development.

The area has typical land use patterns found in other traditional urban neighborhoods throughout the city. Primarily, the industrial land uses are near or along the Roanoke River. Commercial nodes are found on arterial streets, mostly at the larger intersections, i.e. Riverland Road and Bennington Street, 13th Street and Jamison Avenue. Over two-thirds of the properties are residential uses, mostly located on smaller residential streets.

Of the residential land uses, almost two-thirds of the land is used for single family dwellings. A medium density land use pattern is found in Morningside and Kenwood, while a low density residential land use pattern covers most of the Riverdale neighborhood. There are few high-density residential uses in the area. The multifamily complexes are located in the Kenwood and Riverdale neighborhoods, each of which is located in or near an existing village center or a larger intersection. Only six percent of the total land is used for duplex or multifamily use. Multifamily dwellings tend to be located in apartment complexes, rather than scattered within the neighborhood.

An example of housing density and design in the Morningside neighborhood.



Land Use Patterns (cont.)

Over 20% of the land is vacant. Vacant parcels are dispersed in residential, commercial, and industrial areas. Many parcels have steep topography, which limits their development potential. In several cases, vacant land provides a valuable buffer and green space for residential areas.

Generally, future land use should be guided by existing land uses. *Vision 2001-2020* recommends that neighborhoods function as villages, where there is an opportunity to live, work, play, shop, and interact in a neighborhood setting.

Community Focus

Jackson Park is a primary focus for the community. Jackson Park is a 23-acre green space that features Buena Vista Recreation Center-a historic landmark known for its Greek Revival style architecture. The Jackson Park Library and the Jackson Middle School are resources where residents gather for community events, learning, and recreation. Whether watching a youth softball game at Jackson Park, gathering for a book club at the library branch, or using a treadmill at the Jackson Park Fitness Center, this area is a common destination for the community.



Jackson Park: the lighted multipurpose athletic field is used for baseball/softball and soccer/football.

Jackson Park Library Branch: as part of the Roanoke Public Library system, the branch provides convenient access to books and other media materials. It is also a community gathering place.



